

Glendale studies Loop cameras

Councilman cites success in Scottsdale

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While Scottsdale and the state figure out who should control cameras to catch speeders on Loop 101, Glendale is researching whether its section of the freeway needs photo enforcement as well.

Councilman Manny Martinez has asked city staffers for a report in the next 90 days about what it would take to mount cameras to catch speeders on the roughly eight-mile stretch of Loop 101 that runs through Glendale.

Martinez, buoyed by Scottsdale's success, said it seems logical to extend the cameras west. Other council members say they need more information before giving their support.

Scottsdale, in a nine-month pilot that ended in October, mounted cameras at six locations along the 101. Drivers traveling 11 mph over the 65 mph speed limit were photographed and got tickets in the mail.

Although some complained about its intrusiveness, a Scottsdale-commissioned independent report said the cameras worked at slowing motorists down, reducing the mean speed by nearly 10 mph and the likelihood of some collisions by as much as 70 percent.

The Scottsdale City Council, which launched the pilot with a permit from the Arizona Department of Transportation, now wants the state to take over the radar enforcement on the state highway.

Scottsdale officials have asked for a response from the state by Feb. 6.

Gov. Janet Napolitano has acknowledged that the pilot program made the freeway a safer place but has stopped short of endorsing the idea of having the state take over the program.

As for Glendale residents, many favor the photo cops if it slows drivers down.

"Go for it," said former Glendale resident Ljiljna Miok.

She is the mother of a 17-year-old son and says she fears for his safety from other drivers every time he's out on the road. "Put cameras as much as you can, everywhere," Miok said.

Others view it as sliding down the road toward a "big brother" mentality.

"I'm not sure of its accuracy and to receive a ticket in the mail is just not right," David Hornbaker, a Glendale resident, said.

Councilman Martinez said he thinks the enforcement is best handled at the state level but that he would be willing to move forward with some city involvement.

It's not money that appears to be the issue - photo enforcement was a moneymaker in Scottsdale.

During the pilot period, the state collected more than \$2.3million from Loop 101 photo-enforcement citation surcharges. Scottsdale collected \$782,000 after covering expenses for the equipment and court costs.

Martinez suggests that any profit in Glendale might be used to bolster public safety funding.

Although the Scottsdale project was novel in placing cameras on a state highway, Paradise Valley began using photo radar enforcement to crack down on speeders on city streets nearly 20 years ago. Several East Valley cities followed suit, and Glendale soon plans to do the same.

The City Council agreed in June to solicit bids to place a camera at one intersection. The camera, billed as a two-year pilot project, is not yet in place. The city is analyzing bids, which should go to council members in the coming months.

Council members Joyce Clark and Steve Frate said they'll wait for more information before taking a position on Loop 101 cameras.

"I'm not for it or against it until I get more information," Clark said.